

**MINUTES FROM JANUARY 26, 2012**  
**CHILD WELFARE NETWORK MEETING**

The following individuals attended the Child Welfare Network (CWN) meeting at the Las Vegas Country Club:

Mina Arambula  
Adrienne Cox, Adrienne Cox Consulting  
LaRae Daly, Women's Resource Medical Centers of Southern Nevada  
Daniele Dreitzer, Communities in Schools of Southern Nevada  
Linda Fuhriman  
Jeff Grandy, Child Focus  
Toby Hyman, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services  
Gard Jameson, Children's Advocacy Alliance  
Paula Hammack, Clark County Department of Family Services  
Stephanie Holland, Child Focus  
Sindal Kelly, Consultation and Counseling  
Kerri Korin, Kids Peace  
Cristine Lindholm, Vegas PBS  
Sonia Lucero, Nevada Child Seekers  
Jill Marano, Department of Child and Family Services  
April Mastroluca, Assemblywoman  
Patricia Merrifield, Department of Child and Family Services  
Bree Mullin, Desert Psychological Services  
Melody Nelson  
Howard Olshansky, Boys Town Nevada  
Pilar Palos, Child Focus  
Shelia Parks, CASA, Eighth Judicial District Court, Family Division  
James Raffel, SAFY Nevada  
Norton Roitman, MD  
Lisa Ruiz-Lee, Clark County Department of Family Services  
Jennifer Silverman, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada  
Ron Stanfield  
Chris Sutherland, Facilitator  
Denise Tanata Ashby, The Lincy Institute and NV Institute for Children's Research & Policy  
Sophia Varamillo, Child Focus  
Stacey Wedding, Professionals in Philanthropy, LLC  
Hilary Westrom, Ritter Charitable Trust

**Welcome & Introductions**

The meeting started at 8:13 a.m. Chris Sutherland introduced herself and thanked everyone for coming. Rounds of table introductions proceeded.

### **432B Update/Other Legislative Actions**

Denise Tanata-Ashby shared that CWN started a couple of years ago in developing a policy agenda about how abuse and neglect is defined. In December 2011 a meeting was organized to discuss the issues around child welfare statutes and brainstorm. Future meetings will include a strategic look at individual pieces of the legislation to tackle. Denise will forward the document to CWN, which will be expanded and revised moving forward. The next meeting will take place on Thursday, February 2 from 9-11 a.m. at DFS at 701 K Pecos. The topics of the meeting will include definitions of abuse and neglect and the definition of "child." Denise will send out a meeting agenda and notes from other jurisdictions. It is an open meeting. Feedback can be sent to [childrensadvocacyalliance@gmail.com](mailto:childrensadvocacyalliance@gmail.com).

Gard asked Denise what major issues the committee will look at and tackle. Denise said the committee will cover major provisions in 432B that need to be addressed rather than a total rewrite of 432B. Topics will include rights of the extended family, making sure both parents and children have attorneys, practice and enforcement issues, as well as a foster parent bill of rights.

### **The Community We Will Update**

There were several questions raised at the September meeting about the Community We Will (CWW) and CWN, and how both fit in Southern Nevada. Gard provided an overview of CWW and the work Strategic Progress did as the contractor who wrote the business case for child welfare issues in Southern Nevada. CWW and Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA) asked themselves how to make themselves most relevant in the current climate. After some discussion and exploration, CAA and CWW decided to merge. CAA will now be eligible to be a full chapter of Voices for America, doing advocacy across the spectrum of children's issues (education, healthcare, all issues that impact children). The merger will allow both groups to combine their strengths, and CWW will become one of the arms of CAA. Thanks to funding from the Casey Family Foundation to further CWW, CAA will now have paid staff (Denise Tanata-Ashby) to devote attention daily to child welfare issues. The new Board of CAA will include Gard Jameson, Hilary Westrom, Cyndy Ortiz Gustafon, Cristine Lindholm, Emily Neilson and Thom Reilly. The merger and new focus will allow CAA to be focused on a local and national level.

Cyndy shared that through the Accelerate Nevada initiative at the Nevada Community Foundation, there will be strategic financing of initiatives, looking nationally at federal funding sources and identifying where other states are doing this type of work and attracting funding. Now as a state we'll be able to compete for funding. We'll also be able to educate donors on the return on investment of child abuse prevention. Cyndy and Denise shared that they hope CWN will be a natural partnership for policy work done by CAA. What we're doing in child advocacy models a new way of doing business. Hilary emphasized the importance of creating on-ramps for people to connect. It was noted that government and service providers will not be on the new CAA Board (in order to keep CAA a true advocacy organization) but that partnerships with DFS and others will be critically important and will play a distinct role.

Denise elaborated on Voices for America, a national organization that has chapters throughout the country. Given the new structure CAA is embarking on, CAA will qualify to be a full chapter of Voices for America, allowing it to tap into a national network of advocacy organizations and best practices. The website is [www.voices.org](http://www.voices.org), which has helpful resources and information.

Denise will spend 20 hours/week on CAA work and the remainder of her time will be spent doing policy work for Strategic Progress.

### **Next Steps for CWN**

Chris asked about the role of CWN now that we know where everything else stands. Should CWN convene on a set of wider issues? Denise recommended identifying one or two organizations to provide an overview of what they do at each CWN meeting and for CWN to explore opportunities for its attendees to work together. Questions that arose included: What's our universe? What is CWN's niche? Is CWN broader than children? Who are the children and families that define the universe? Where are the gaps, overlaps and needs? Who do we bring in to fill the gaps or needs?

Gard noted that the Community Assessment being conducted by United Way of Southern Nevada in 2012 will help provide a broad, big picture landscape of the needs of our region. The federal funders forum in the spring will also shed light on federal resources our state isn't accessing.

Discussion ensued about conducting a landscape inventory, discussing what groups already exist, and what the child welfare universe looks like.

Denise reviewed the legislative framework developed by CWN for the last session. It included 1.) Preventing children/families from entering the system, 2.) Preventing those in the child welfare system from entering the system again, and 3.) Preventing young adults who age out of the system from re-entering the system as adults. Denise shared the importance of knowing what groups are doing in each of those three legislative areas. It would benefit all of us to have a more formal collaborative structure.

Some were concerned about CWN becoming too broad and being too many things to too many people. Cyndy shared the power of knowing your mission and your niche and being an expert in something, so you can mobilize resources (funding, policies, etc.) around that niche.

Cristine Lindholm mentioned the importance of having a value add for anyone invited to the table.

Paula Hammack said we need to figure out the touch points in child welfare. Where are we strong? Where are we weak? Focus on what we have, what we want, what we need, make the ask, and keep momentum moving forward.

After much discussion, everyone agreed that a broad, general landscape analysis would be helpful as a next step, with a goal of offering more time for strategic and focused collaborations as well as connections to other groups that do key work that will inform child welfare work and vice versa. Understanding the broader landscape and how CWN leverages resources will be critical to our success moving forward. Stacey Wedding offered to share what she put together for CWN a few years ago. Denise, Stacey and Cyndy will pull information together for the April meeting. It was recommended that a brief survey be done of CWN membership including gathering some of the following information:

- Name of member organization
- Mission
- Geographic region served
- Population (ages) served
- Other groups you participate in
- Value of participating in CWN (as an individual and/or agency)

Adrienne Cox offered to provide the template developed/used for early childhood work she did.

Assemblywoman April Mastroluca reaffirmed the value of CWN and encouraged Denise (and the other committee she is organizing around 432B) to speak with legislators individually in advance of any formal presentations to legislative committees. It's important not to assume legislators who serve on certain committees are knowledgeable about the issue at hand (such as 432B).

#### **News, Announcements & Updates**

Due to the full agenda, there wasn't time for news and announcements. Chris recommended contacting Jane Ramos at the Nevada Community Foundation if anyone has something important and timely to share with the entire group.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, April 12, from 7:30-9:30 a.m. at the Las Vegas Country Club.